

DRAFT MINUTES
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUES
June 22, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Ernie Martinez, Chairman at 9:05 am. Introductions were done. Agenda and the minutes for May 2010 were moved and accepted.

Attendance: J. Granda, D. Valkema, J. Martinez, J. Miller, M. Schmidt, P. Edwards, J. David, S. Hix, A. Rigerman, S. Kohlenberg

Discussion: There was general discussion concerning the original agenda that was approved by the Chair and send out to the public two weeks before the meeting and an agenda changed by the Chair a day before the meeting. **A motion was made by Paul Edwards and seconded by Denise Valkema that all agenda items first must go through the appropriate committee and be approved to go forward. The motion passed.** John Miller yes- Sam Kohlenberg yes- Sandra Hix yes- Marie Schmidt no – Jackson David no- Denise Valkema yes- Jose Granda yes – Paul Edwards yes- Alan Rigerman no.

Access Committee: Mr. Miller gave his report. Six members were present and two people from the public also ADA office was represented. There were three issues: remote access, election issue and special event affidavit. John Miller read a statement by the ADA office suggesting to CODI that up to 8 people be allowed on the phone. At this time the ADA Office is looking into other types of accommodations based on availability, feasibility and budgetary needs. There was agreement at the meeting to support up to 8 people on the phone, allowing 15 minutes of open discussion so board members can freely talk to each other, and 15 minutes at the end of the meeting for people from the public to speak. It was also suggested that individual agenda items could be opened up to the public after CODI members have spoken. Because of time, it was considered reasonable for the public have 3-5 minutes to talk. Based on the number of people in the public who wanted to speak it was said, if a person couldn't get a chance to speak then they could contact the ADA office or the Chair so they would be heard.

Mr. Miller said that the committee was satisfied with the special event affidavit; but asked for a sentence to be put in about the wires used to hold up tents being a hazard for people who are blind or visually impaired. There was also a suggestion about putting in assistive listening devices and adding a time frame for when advertisement material of events go out. It was also brought up about the possibility of imposing fines but Ms. Hyams said there probably are a number of reasons departments could prefer not imposing fines but if an organization having the special event don't comply with their signed affidavit, the County reserves the right not to allow any further events by that organization.

Next issue address was the issue about Election Department having a written policy allowing people with disabilities to go to the front of the line in order to vote. A statement from Election was read stating that they follow the election policies of the State. They do provide chairs and allow people to take numbers, so they can sit down if they need to. It was stated earlier by Elections that they do encourage the Clerk to allow people to vote first but it is at their discretion. There was further discussion about other election issues. Mr. Edwards had to wait a considerable time and yet the Speech Ivotronic was not being used. He would like to speak about this issue further at the Access Committee Meeting. Ms. Llguna reported that she had trouble at an election site when she was not allowed to sit down. She also said that she had gone to the Fruit and Spice Park where the food vendor tent was put in the grass. Ms. Hyams asked Ms. Llguna to please call her with details because that is the only way to be sure that infractions are addressed and staff is properly reprimanded. **A motion was made by Paul Edwards and seconded by Alan Rigerman to defer the acceptance of the Access committee minutes until some revisions are made by the Chair of the committee and are approved at the next access meeting in July. Motion passed.**

Ms. Hyams introduced Mirtha Gonzales who is the ADA Coordinator for the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. She said that at the Governor's week long Hurricane Preparation Workshop, Ms. Gonzales was asked to speak about the Miami-Dade Program.

Ms. Gonzales: We are a small dept. of 10 EM coordinators for a County of 2.4 million residents. Each Coordinator has multiple program areas that they manage. *The 5 Programs that I manage are:*

CEMP (Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan), COOP (Continuity of Operations Planning), NIMS (National Incident Management Systems), Policy & Procedures for DEM, ADA (Americans with Disability Act) - ensure compliance at our evacuation centers and ensure that our EM plans capture ADA standards.

- Emergency Management:

Coordinates plans, strategies, guidelines, have drills/exercises and test our resources throughout the year. Off-season is as busy as hurricane season: This January we activated the EOC for Haiti Relief efforts after the earthquake, activated for Pro-Bowl and Super Bowl, activated for wild fires in the Everglades.

- EM Principle concepts and processes are constant; although *disasters are unique* ... we use an all hazard approach

In May we conducted the **State Hurricane Exercise** and invited various members of the disability community to participate as observers and provide feedback. We also have a Special Needs Advisory Panel (SNAP) that reviews our Emergency Plans and provides feedback.

There are 3 types of Evacuation Centers:

- Hurricane Evacuation Centers (HEC) - Operated by American Red Cross
In collaboration with County Personnel
- Special Needs Evacuation Centers (SNECs) - Operated by Health Dept and Jackson Nurses in collaboration with County Personnel
- Pet-Friendly Evacuation Centers (PHECs) - Operated by Animal Services Dept in collaboration with County personnel

SNEC / PHEC are registration driven and applications can be downloaded from the two websites:

- www.miamidade.gov/oem;
- www.miamidade.gov/animals

Although these evacuation centers are registration driven - no one has ever been turned away.

Miami-Dade County has a "People with Special Needs" (PSN) Registry

(as mandated by Florida State Legislation Statute 252.355)

The County developed an Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program (EEAP) in order to manage the registry and transportation needs of the individuals needing assistance during an emergency or disaster. There are presently only 3000 PSN clients on our registry.

MDCR staff assists with the registry called down process and each registrant is contacted and advised of the impending disaster or that an emergency has occurred and they are offered transportation from their home to the nearest Special Needs Evacuation Center (SNEC).

Complimentary Transportation is provided to each registrant. Evacuation center is determined according to the individual's medical needs as per the application that is signed by their doctor.

There are 6 Special Needs Evacuation Centers (SNECs) and we have 23 hospitals that participate in the program as Medical Management Facilities (MMFs).

The County in its' disaster planning has built-in redundancies with regards to transportation:

- MDT provides transportation from designated evacuation pickup points to HECs
- MDCPS (public school buses) provide door-to-door service for our PSN registrants to SNECs
- STS provides transportation to PSN registrants to MMF (Medical Management Facility a.k.a. Hospitals)... (this is in addition to STS managing their usual client transportation schedule)
- Private ambulance provides transportation to PSN registrants that require Basic Life Support (BLS) transport to MMFs

- MDR and municipal fire depts. provide transportation to MMFs for those PSN registrants that are ventilator dependent

Additionally, Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation (MDCR) transportation buses have also been built into our disaster planning as a backup for MDCPS. The County can also request mutual aid from surrounding counties and the State.

When a "State of Emergency" is declared ...the County receives more resources and assets from State and Federal sources.

During times of emergencies, the County issues Emergency Alert System "EAS" messages via the media (radio & TV). These messages come from our EOC (Emergency Operations Center) via the Public Information Officer (PIO) and Planning units.

Once the winds reach 39 mph, transportation stops because, it's not safe to be on the road. Therefore, we always advise evacuees to leave early if they are going to evacuate.

All Miami-Dade County evacuation centers have EMS personnel onsite with an ambulance and Public School Police to ensure safety.

Resources available at Evacuation Centers:

- 879 Special Needs Enhanced Beds (17.5" from the floor)
- 840 Cots
- 1,216 Air Mattresses
- 1,150 Floor Pads
- 6,238 Blankets
- Intermittent Oxygen in our SNECS (only)

During a disaster, all County Employees are Disaster Assistance Employees and are essential to the EOC for disaster support assignment such as shuttling for seniors and the disabled; providing assistance at our various evacuation centers; conducting traffic control; managing PODS (points of distribution sites); etc...

The County has a Disaster Program that assigns County staff to assist before, during and after an emergency. Some County staff has been identified as having basic sign language abilities. The County is looking into the feasibility of utilizing these people during an actual emergency when people might be in evacuation centers.

These people will augment the Red Cross and County staff in an emergency evacuation center. In no way would these people be a replacement for qualified sign language interpreters after a disaster has past or when there are qualified sign language interpreters available. These people can also provide orientation, reading to blind individuals or assisting some with recharging of their wheelchair batteries.

- After the meeting, Ms. Gonzales had asked two items to be put into the minutes: All evacuation centers have TTY's and the capacity to recharge wheelchairs.
- There was some discussion following Ms. Gonzalez's presentation. Ms. Green from the Center for Independent Living, asked why the committee of people with disabilities which participate in OEM drills was kept a secret. Ms. Gonzales stated that it wasn't a secret and in fact people from CODI and from CIL were part of that group and she said the committee wasn't developed to be opened to the general public. Mr. Dubin asked why there were no accessible beds last year and why there hasn't been transfer assistance. He also asked why the Red Cross wasn't at the meeting. Ms. Gonzales said that in 2006, she put in for a 500,000 grant to buy beds and 18 months later she was told she had been approved but it took 8-9 months later before she was able to purchase the beds. Ms. Gonzales said that for years there have been Para-Medics and EMTs with a Fire Rescue vehicle assigned to evacuation ~~shelters~~ centers *(audiotape reflects the word centers) so they would be available if anyone needed to make a transfer. Also at the Special Needs ~~Shelters~~ centers* there were also health department personnel and Jackson Memorial Nurses.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am